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*Some* CONSIDERATIONS *on a* CONTROVERTED  
 PASSAGE *of* HERODOTUS. *By the Right Honourable*  
*the Earl of* CHARLEMONT, *President of the Royal Irish*  
*Academy and F. R. S.*

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HOW far the prevailing mode of philosophic scepticism may or may not have benefited mankind I will not pretend to determine, it being sufficient for my purpose that its prevalence be allowed. Neither does this fashionable wisdom content itself with the higher ranges of philosophical enquiry: it descends even to criticism and historical researches; and the modern wise man, deeming it below his dignity to follow those ancient guides by whom our forefathers have, perhaps too implicitly, been led, and presuming on his own sagacity, sets up his bold guesses against the relations of authors almost contemporary with the facts they have asserted, and delights in proving, or endeavouring to prove, that he is more profoundly skilled in the knowledge of antiquity than the ancients themselves. There is perhaps no author who has suffered more from this critical pre-  
 [ A 2 ] Read July 7, 1790.  
sumption

sumption than that best and earliest of profane historians, Herodotus. This elegant and instructive writer, "*qui princeps*," as Tully says, "*genus hoc ornavit*," has of late years been the principal butt of conceited criticism; his opinions have been controverted, and decried as absurd; his assertions have been peremptorily contradicted; and this luminary, which had for ages been supposed to have thrown the most certain light on the dark historic times, has been discovered to be at best an ignis fatuus, while in its stead the bright sun of modern erudition has been set up as sufficiently luminous to enlighten the most remote and obscure ages, by casting its rays backwards into the depths of time. Whether I may not be too partial to an author who, during my Eastern voyage, was my constant and beloved companion, I will not pretend to say; but this I can safely assert, that though perhaps in those circumstances and opinions which he relates or adopts on the authority of others he may be often erroneous, wherever he speaks from his own knowledge I have always found him a faithful guide; and in many instances, with some of which I may perhaps hereafter trouble the Academy, I have clearly discovered that the errors which have been imputed to him have proceeded, not from his fault, but from our ignorance of his true meaning; one of which misconceptions, (for such at least it appears to me) shall be the subject of the present essay.

ROBINSON in his Dissertation prefixed to Hesiod, and Mr. Musgrave in a posthumous work entitled "Two Dissertations on Grecian Mythology," and many others, have bitterly inveighed  
against

against Herodotus for the opinion supposed to be conveyed in the following words, Lib. 11. Cap. 53. page 129. Edit. Wessell: Ἡσίοδον γὰρ καὶ Ὅμηρον ἡλικίην τετρακοσίοισι ἔτεσι δοκεῖ μεν πρεσβυτέρους γενεσθαι, καὶ οὐ πλεον. οὗτοι δὲ εἰσι οἱ ποιήσαντες Θεογονίην Ἑλλήσι, καὶ τοῖσι Θεοῖσι τὰς ἐπωνυμίας δόντες, καὶ τίμας τε καὶ τεχνὰς διέλοντες, καὶ εἶδεα αὐτῶν σημεῖα—“ For Hesiod and Homer, whom I believe to  
 “ have existed four hundred years before me and no more,  
 “ were they who formed a theogony for the Greeks, gave  
 “ surnames to the Gods, distinguished their honours and their  
 “ functions, and invested them with their several forms.”

IN the common acceptation of this passage, which these gentlemen seem to have adopted, nothing is more certain than that Herodotus is mistaken. That religion, and Gods, together with their respective names, were known to the Greeks long before the times of Hesiod and Homer has been proved by fundry irrefragable arguments; but, if no other proofs were to be had, the manner in which these poets speak of the Gods, as of beings long since known, and worshipped by the ancestors of the generation then existing, would alone be sufficient evidence to this point; and more especially Homer, who clearly supposes every theological circumstance of which he treats to have been commonly known at the time of the Trojan war, many years before he was born; and surely it would have been a strange, absurd and unaccountable anachronism in this great bard, if he should have made his heroes invoke by name deities whose worship did not exist in their time, and whose names he himself had invented, little less, by the shortest calculation, than  
 a century

a century afterwards ; yet, as I do not like to suppose an author, circumstanced like Herodotus both in antiquity and in character, guilty of an opinion absurdly erroneous, and consequently do not like to dissent from him in a matter, of which he must have been a much more competent judge than the most learned antiquarian of the present age, I should wish, if possible, to discover some such sense of his words as might reconcile his opinion with what is evidently the truth, and might clear him from the suspicion of absurdity, an imputation which, from the general tenor of his writings, he so little deserves. In order to this I shall endeavour to shew that, by the words of our author, it is not necessary he should be understood to mean that Hesiod and Homer were the inventors, or even the first importers, of Grecian theology ; but only that before their time, and previous to their writings, the Greeks possessed no regular system of that science, which was by them regulated, amplified and improved in all its several branches.

AND first, we are told by Herodotus that these poets *formed a theogony for the Greeks*. The word ποιησάντες may perhaps be construed to mean \*, as in some instances it does, not that a theogony was originally framed by them, but that they were the first who *poetized* upon this subject, or who gave to the Greeks a system of theogony in verse. But, to take the word in its more obvious acceptation, the assertion can mean no  
more

\* Vide Stephani Thesaur. Art. ποιῆω.

more than that they first traced and distinguished the families of the Gods, or, in other words, gave a compleat and perfect system of the divine genealogy. Neither does this opinion of our author appear by any means ill-founded, or even contrary to the ideas at this day adopted by many learned men. For though Musæus is said to have written upon the subject before the time of Hesiod, yet is this fact problematical; and the poetic treatise of the latter\*, which has come down perfect even to our times, is, at the least, a strong presumption in favour of Herodotus; especially when we consider that, whether right or wrong I will not presume to determine, that primeval antiquarian is, as we shall presently see, decidedly of opinion that all those poets who are said to have existed before Hesiod and Homer were in fact posterior to their time.

THE second point asserted is, that these poets gave *surnames* to the Gods. And here I must premise that the sense in which this passage is usually understood, namely, that Hesiod and  
Homer

\* I am well aware that though the Theogony of Hesiod be generally admitted to be genuine, some few critics, both ancient and modern, have ventured to suspect that the poem which has come down to us is not the work of that most venerable bard. Among these, Pausanias seems to doubt, when in his *Boeoticks*, Cap. xxvii. page 762, he says, “ we know also that Hesiod, *or whoever in his name has written the Theogony*.” And expressly declares his opinion, *Arcadica*, Cap. xviii. page 635, “ that having accurately read the Theogony of Hesiod, and certain verses attributed to Quinus, “ he doth not think either of them genuine.” The authenticity of the poem is however generally confessed, and this passage of Herodotus seems to me a strong proof in its favour, as it from hence appears more than probable that, at the least, Hesiod had written a Theogony.

Homer were the first who assigned names to the Gods, must necessarily involve Herodotus in an absurdity of which no author, even the meanest, can be supposed capable, by making him contradict what he himself has asserted a few lines before, where he tells us that *the Pelasgians received the names of the other Gods, and lastly that of Bacchus from Egypt, and the Greeks from them.* Nothing surely less than absolute necessity should induce us to suppose our author capable of so manifest a contradiction, and I hope to shew that no such necessity exists. The word *Ἑπωνυμίας* must be interpreted not *nomina* but *cognomina*; such is undoubtedly its plain signification, and indeed our author himself, not many lines previous to the passage in question, speaking of the Pelasgians, and of their early theology, clearly infers an essential difference between the *Ὀνομα* and the *Ἑπωνυμία*—*Ἑπωνυμίην δ' ἔδ' Ὀνομα ἐποιεύντο οὐδενὶ αὐτέων.* We may also observe that *Ὀνομαῖα* is invariably used to express the names received by the Pelasgi from Egypt, and by the Greeks from them, while the appellations said to be given to the Gods by Hesiod and Homer are alone distinguished by the word *Ἑπωνυμίας*.

As the entire passage is curious, and may help to elucidate the subject of this essay, I will give its sense at large, translating as literally as I am able.

“ These Pelasgi, before this time, as I learned at Dodona,  
 “ praying to the Gods, sacrificed all things to all in common,  
 “ but

“ but affixed to none of them either name or firname, for they  
 “ had no where been informed in this particular ; but they  
 “ called them Gods from this cause, as aptly disposing of  
 “ all events and of all regions. But, after a long space of  
 “ time, they received the names (τα ουνονομαῖα) of the other Gods  
 “ from Egypt, but that of Bacchus a long while after. And  
 “ some time afterward they consulted the oracle at Dodona  
 “ concerning these names (περι τῶν Ουνονομαίων) for this oracle is  
 “ esteemed the most ancient among the Greeks, and was the  
 “ only one existing at that period. These Pelasgi then, con-  
 “ sulting at Dodona whether they should make use of those  
 “ names (τα Ουνονομαῖα) which they had from the barbarians, the  
 “ Oracle answered that they should make use of them. And  
 “ so from that time they worshipped (or sacrificed—Εθυσον) giving  
 “ those names (τοῖσι Ουνονομασί) to the Gods ; and afterward the  
 “ Greeks received them from the Pelasgi. But from whence  
 “ each of the Gods had his existence, or whether they have all  
 “ of them been from eternity, or under what forms, are matters  
 “ unknown until yesterday, as I may say. For Hesiod and  
 “ Homer, whom I believe to have lived four hundred years  
 “ before me, and no more, were they who formed a Theogony  
 “ for the Greeks, gave firmnames (τας Επωνυμίας) to the Gods,  
 “ distinguished their honours and their functions, and assigned  
 “ to them their several forms. To these men the poets, who  
 “ are reported to have been prior, were, in my opinion, poste-  
 “ rior ; and the first things which I have related the priestesses of  
 “ Dodona told me, but the latter, respecting Hesiod and Homer,  
 “ I myself assert.”

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THUS



THUS we find, and must evidently infer from the context, that, though Herodotus may be perfectly right in saying that Hesiod and Homer were the first who gave to the Gods certain appellations which he terms *Επωνυμιαι*, it does not follow from thence that they were not before distinguished by specific names, *Ονομαζα*; neither can our historian, who positively asserts the contrary, be charged with any such absurd and false assertion. What these *Επωνυμιαι* were it is very difficult to explain, and I fear even to hint a wild conjecture that they might possibly have been the epithets \* which Homer usually annexes to the names of the Gods, and which seem to be strictly appropriated; such as the cloud-compelling Jupiter, the ox-eyed Juno, the far-darting Apollo; epithets which are sometimes formed into names, and used as such, as in the instance of *Αργυροτοξος*, bearer of the silver bow——

*Κλῦθε μευ Ἀργυροτοξέ, ὅς Χρυσὴν ἀμφὶ βεβηκας.*

Or rather perhaps they may have been those surnames given to the Gods, either from the place in which they were principally venerated, and worshipped as tutelar deities, or from some peculiar and distinctive attribute; as *Ζεὺς Λυκαῖος*—*Ἀπολλων ὁ Ἐπικουρίος*, the helper, &c. &c. And this conjecture is in some degree fortified by a passage of Pausanias,—*Arcadica*, Cap. xxxviii. Page 679, where speaking of several temples on Mount Lyceus,  
he

\* Hesiod's Poem is also full of these epithets. For examples, vide the first twenty lines of the *Θεογονία*.

he mentions one of Apollo in these words:—*Ἔστιν δὲ ἐν τοῖς πρὸς ἀνατολάς τοῦ ὄρους Ἀπολλωνος ἱερόν, ἐπὶ κλησὶν Παρρᾶσιον*—“ There is in “ the part of the mountain that looks eastward a temple of “ Apollo, *sirnamed Parrbasius*.” And again, speaking of a temple of Eurynome in the country of the Phigalenses, he thus expresses himself. *Arcadica*, Cap. xli. page 684: *τὴν δὲ Εὐρυνομένην ὃ μὲν τῶν Φιγαλεῶν Δῆμος ἐπὶ κλησὶν εἶναι πεπίστευκεν Ἀρτεμιδος*—“ The “ people of the Phigalenses believe that Eurynome is a *sirname* “ of Diana.” Now that *ἐπὶ κλησις* and *ἐπωνυμία* are words perfectly synonymous we know from the authority of Stephanus, who explains the former by the latter. Perhaps also I may be allowed to hazard another conjecture, which appears to me not entirely without foundation: The appellations given to the Gods by Homer and Hesiod may possibly have been no other than translations into the Greek language from the original names received from Egypt by the Pelasgi, and may have been considered as additional or surnames, the old Egyptian appellations being still esteemed the real *ὀνόματα* of the several divinities. Most of the names given by the Greeks to their deities have certain etymological meanings, which mark either the origin, or some essential and peculiar attribute of the Gods who are distinguished by them. Thus *Ἀφροδίτη*, Venus, is derived from *Ἀφρος*, *spuma*\*, because she was supposed to have arisen

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from

\* Of this derivation we are informed by Hesiod, *Ἑοιογόνει*, page 16, verse 194. The whole of this passage is so poetical, that I will endeavour to give a literal though very inadequate translation of it.

from the froth or foam of the sea, and may possibly have been translated from an Egyptian word of the same sense and etymology. That the Greeks were accustomed to substitute translations for Egyptian names we know to a certainty. Thus Chemmis or Chemmo \*, which meant the city of Pan, was by them named Panopolis, and ON, the city of the sun, was translated

..... Beauteous and revered  
Went forth the dame divine. Around, the grass  
Beneath her soft feet sprang. Her, Aphrodite,  
A Goddess Foam-begot, and Cytharea  
With garlands crown'd, both men and gods have named,  
For that from foam her nourishment she drew,  
And that Cythera first of lands received her ;  
And Cyprogene, as born within the bounds,  
Of billowy Cyprus, and Philomeda,  
Partial to that from whence she claims her birth.  
New-born she seeks the assembly of the Gods,  
Usher'd by Love, while fair Desire attends ;  
Ev'n from the first this honour she possess'd,  
With men and Gods immortal doom'd to rule  
O'er virgin converse, smiles and wanton wiles,  
Dulcet delight, friendship, and blandishment !

ὅτι γὰρ πολυκλύδιον ἐν Κυπρῷ must mean, " because she was born in the Cyprian Sea," and I have therefore translated, *within the bounds of billowy Cyprus*. We have already been informed that the Goddess was born at sea, and may therefore conclude that she first arose some where near the coast of Cyprus, from whence the winds drove her to Cythera, where she first landed. The appellations of Venus recorded in these lines may all of them have been *Επωνυμιαί*.

\* τὸ γὰρ τοὺς ἐγχωρίους ἔμοιρον ἀγαλματὰ πεποιηκεῖναι κατὰ πᾶν ἱερὸν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πικρὸν ἐπωνυμιὸν κατὰ τὴν Θηβαΐδα, καλεσμένην μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν ἐγχωρίων Χεμμῶ, μετεμμενηνομένην δὲ Πανὸς Πόλιν. Diod. Sic. Lib. i. page 21.

For ON, Heliopolis, vide Theophil. ad Autol. 111. Vide also Cellarii Geog. Tom. 11. Africa antiqua. page 35—6.

OM is a mystical word in the Sanscrit or sacred Indian language. Vide Asiatic Researches, page 242—Sir William Jones's Dissertation on the Gods of Greece, Italy and India.  
" The

lated Heliopolis. Neither was this custom, which probably arose from their extreme delicacy of ear, and from a well-founded, though sometimes perhaps faucy predilection for their own melodious idiom, confined to the Egyptian tongue. All other  
Eastern

“ The Vishnu, Siva and Brahma are expressed by the letters A.U.M, which coalesce and form the mystical word OM. Whether the Egyptian ON, which is commonly supposed to mean the sun, be the sanscrit monosyllable, I leave others to determine.” And again, page 262, “ I am inclined to believe that not only Crishna or Vishnu, but even Brahma and Siva, when united, and expressed by the mystical word OM, were designed by the first idolaters to represent the solar fire.” And afterwards, page 272, “ The three powers, creative, preservative and destructive, which the Hindus express by the trilateral word O’M, were grossly ascribed by the first idolaters to the heat, light and flame of their mistaken divinity, the Sun; and their wiser successors in the East, who perceived that the Sun was only a created thing, applied those powers to its Creator.”

Diospolis, Hermopolis, Heracleopolis, *Aphroditopolis*, and all the many other Greek names of Egyptian cities so formed, were probably translations from the Egyptian. The first of these, Diospolis, is evidently translated from the Egyptian and Hebrew name of this metropolis, AMON NO, or NO AMON, the city of Jupiter, which was indeed its only Eastern name, the appellation Thebes, ancient as it is, having been given to it by the Greeks, as we are informed by Diodorus Siculus, Lib. i. page 54, who, speaking of its foundation by Busiris, has these explicit words—*Κτίσαι τὴν ὑπο μὲν Αἰγυπτίῳι καλεμένην Δίος πολις την μεγάλην, ὑπο δὲ τῶν Ἑλλήνων Θεβας*. Neither can I avoid taking notice of the singularity of this circumstance, from which it appears that even at a period so early as previous to the time of Homer, who mentions the Egyptian metropolis by the name Thebes, it was customary with the Greeks to give names of their own to foreign cities, and even to entire countries, since Herodotus informs us, Lib. ii. that anciently all Egypt was called Thebæ—*παλαι αἱ Θεβαι Αἰγυπτος καλεῖτο*. In the time of the Ptolomies, when, from the widespread conquests of Alexander the Greek language was become universal, when that fastidious people had every reason to look down upon all mankind as their inferiors, and when the sovereigns of Asia, and particularly of Egypt, were Greeks, such translations as we have already mentioned, from languages by them accounted barbarous, might naturally have been expected; but that at a period so early as that of the Trojan war, when Greece was yet in her infancy, and when the Greeks were far less polished than the nations of the East, they should have taken this impertinent liberty, appears to me surprizing, and even unaccountable; a liberty which has undoubtedly been mischievous to posterity, by superadding confusion to the natural and inevitable obscurity of remote history.

Eastern languages were treated by them in the same manner; and the fact which we have asserted may be farther exemplified by their translation of Baalbec, the city of Baal, which in the Phœnician signified Lord, and was used as an appellation of the Sun, as the supreme Lord of that people, into the same more musical word, Heliopolis\*. Such translations may possibly have been the *Επωνυμιαί* in question, and under this idea we may suppose that Homer in the Iliad may have made his heroes invoke the divinities by these translated names, as better adapted to

\* A difficulty, however, which occurs respecting this last conjecture, must not be concealed. In the beginning of this book, Euterpe, page 105, Herodotus informs us that he journeyed to Heliopolis and Thebes in order to discover if the priests of these cities concurred in sentiment with those of Memphis, from whom he had hitherto principally received his information: "For," says he, "the Heliopolitans are esteemed the wisest among the Egyptians." He then proceeds to relate what he heard from them, excepting only that mysterious knowledge concerning the divine nature into which probably he had been initiated, and which consequently he was not at liberty to reveal. And here, among other Egyptian pretensions, he tells us that, *according to their report*, the Egyptians first made use of the *surnames* of twelve Gods, which the Greeks derived from them—*δωδεκα τε θεων Επωνυμιας ελεγον πρωτους Αιγυπτίους νομισαι, και Έλληνας παρὰ σφειν αναλαβειν*.—From whence we may perceive that the priests of Egypt, in their zeal to be accounted inventors and founders of all mythological science, arrogated to themselves the original use (or rather sanction, for *νομίζω* properly signifies *lege sancio*) not only of the *names* but of the *surnames* also of the Gods. That Herodotus however does not give credit to this claim we may infer, as well from his afterwards ascribing the invention to Hesiod and Homer, as from the concluding words of the paragraph in question, where he expressly says that the *greater part only* of the Heliopolitan claims they demonstrate to be well founded—*και τούτων μὲν τὰ πλεα έργω εδηλυν ουὶα γενομενα*—which two passages taken together would induce us to suppose that the original use, or institution, of *surnames* for the Gods, and their pretension that the Greeks had received such surnames from them, was precisely that part of their claims for which he did not think they had any good foundation. What these *Επωνυμιαί* were, of which the Heliopolitan priests arrogated to their country the first use, it is impossible even to guess: but as they might *possibly* have been of the same nature with those of which our historian ascribes the invention to the Grecian bards, and cannot well be supposed to have been *translated names*, candour will not allow me to conceal a circumstance which might perhaps seem in some degree to militate against my last conjecture.

to the melody of his metre, and to the fastidious ears of his countrymen, without incurring the censure of anachronism, though none but the original Egyptian appellations had been used or even known at the time of the Trojan war. Virgil may seem, at the first glance, to have been guilty of a similar error, if such it should be deemed; his heroes speak of the Gods by names which could not possibly be known to the Trojans, the Greeks, or probably to the ancient inhabitants of Italy. But then his heroes speak a language also of which in their times they must necessarily have been ignorant, and consequently the names of that adopted language are substituted for those by which they had in reality invoked their deities, as the only appellations which could be intelligible to such as possessed no other tongue but that in which he wrote. His Trojans speak Latin, and therefore necessarily call upon their Gods by Latin names. A similar apology cannot, however, be made for Homer; his language was probably the same in fact, allowing for such alterations and improvements as would naturally be made in the time which elapsed between the Trojan war and his day, with that which was spoken by the Greeks, and, as some suppose, by the Trojans also, at the siege of Troy. But yet he may be surely allowed, without being liable to any great degree of censure, to make use of names for the divinities translated into the vernacular idiom, both of his own time and of the period which he celebrates, from those Egyptian appellations which were used in the age of his heroes; but had he made his heroes invoke by name Gods, who before his time were nameless, and to whom he himself had first given names, the  
anachronism

anachronism would then indeed be palpable, and without excuse.

SUCH are the conjectures that have occurred to me upon this very obscure subject, which however I only mention as such. In matters of antiquity so very remote every possible guess may be allowed, and the antiquarian science seems exclusively to be entitled to the delightful privilege of building castles in the air.

THE third assertion of Herodotus is that Hesiod and Homer *distinguished* the honours and functions of the Gods; for so I interpret the word *διελογησε*. That is to say, that whereas before the time of these bards no specific mode of worship, or species of sacrifice was allotted to each of the several divinities, and their tutelary powers were mixed and confounded, these poets regulated the tutelage and the functions of every several God, and assigned to each his particular mode of worship and of sacrifice. And upon this part of our author's opinion I certainly need not dwell, as it is by no means absurd to suppose that such was really the fact. Nothing can be more probable than that in the very early ages such confusion existed in religious worship, and no persons were more likely, both from their influence and superior knowledge, to inculcate and to settle these regulations than the bards in question.

IN the last place our author asserts that the peculiar forms under which the Gods were pictured and adored were invented  
by

by these poets. And this may certainly be true though the Gods had been acknowledged, named and worshipped long before their time: neither is it improbable that the figures, by which the several divinities are known and distinguished, may not have been in use before the period assigned to them by Herodotus. In the rude ages, when sculpture, if known, was rarely and imperfectly practised, a stone unhewn, or at best but roughly cut or hammered, received the name of a god, and was worshipped; and such representations are known to have descended even to the most polished and enlightened ages of heathenism, being, as I suppose, revered as the first and original ideas under which the deity had been represented. Venus Urania, for example, is still to be seen under the figure of a pyramidal stone on the reverse of a Grecian coin of Caracalla, quoted by Trifan, tom. 11. page 220. Neither is this medal singular, as many others exist of different ages bearing the same impress. Pausanias also informs us, Attica Cap. xix. page 44, that in his time the same goddess was worshipped at Athens under a form nearly similar, *ταύτης γὰρ σχήμα*, &c.; and the figure of this goddess, who was the same with the Paphian Venus, is accurately described by Tacitus, where he mentions the visit paid to her temple by Titus Vespasianus, Histor. Lib. ii. page 198—"Simulachrum De non effigie humana, continuus orbis latiore initio tenuem in ambitum, metæ modo, exurgens, et ratio in obscuro." We are likewise told by Pausanias, Bœotica Cap. xxvii. page 761, that the Thespians from the beginning honoured Cupid principally among the Gods, and that their most ancient figure of him was



*a white stone*—Θεῶν δὲ οἱ Θεεπιῖς τιμῶσιν Ἑρώτα μάλιστα ἐξ ἀρχῆς, καὶ σφίσιν ἄγαλμα παλαιότατον ἀργός λιθος.

IF then we may be allowed to suppose that in the dark and rude ages of Greece those elegant and peculiarly adapted figures of the Gods which have descended even to our times were not used or even known, there surely can be no absurdity in supposing that such figures, which from the beauty and harmony of their composition I may almost stile poetical, were the invention of these great and ancient bards, these bright luminaries by whom mankind was in all respects enlightened and influenced, and who, if they be allowed to have first distinguished the *functions* of the Gods, may not improbably be supposed to have invented those symbols by which such appropriated functions were indicated; or, at the least, that their writings may have afforded sufficient hints for the composition and formation of the symbolical images which were afterward adopted. And the probability of this last supposition will be considerably increased, when we reflect that many of those peculiar symbols and even features, by which the statues and pictures of the Gods are marked and adorned, are particularly mentioned and described by Homer—such as the thunderbolt and black brows of Jupiter, the large eyes of Juno, the bow and lyre of Apollo, the trident of Neptune, the ægis and blue eyes of Minerva, &c. Neither can it by any means be accounted improbable that statuaries and painters may have framed their images and portraits upon the ideas of Homer, since we are informed that, in an age long after the existence of that inspiring bard, from  
his

his sublime description Phidias\* caught the noble idea, which enabled him to form his great master-piece, the Olympian Jove. Perhaps also I may be allowed to mention, as in some sort favourable to this conjecture, a passage of Strabo, who, Lib. viii. page 593, cites the following ancient saying—*Κορυψῶς δ' εἶρηται καὶ το, ὃ τὰς τῶν Θεῶν εἰκονας, ἢ μονος ἰδών, ἢ μονος δειξας*—"It is wittily said of Homer that he alone saw the forms of the Gods, or he alone shewed them." Indeed, though from the descriptive manner in which Homer every where speaks of the Gods we might naturally be induced to suppose that he describes them from images such as now exist, and which were frequent in his time, yet as there is some reason to suspect, not only from the

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authority

\* For the verification of this ancient tradition see Valerius Maximus, Lib. iii. page 314; Macrobius, Lib. v. Saturnalia, Cap. xiii.; but above all Strabo, Lib. viii. page 543.—*Απορρημονευουσι δὲ τοῦ Φειδίου, &c.*—"It is recorded that Phidias, being asked by Pandæmus (or rather Panæmus) what archetype he had chosen to imitate in expressing the image of Jupiter, answered, that which is proposed in these verses of Homer, Iliad i. verse 528 :

Ἦ, καὶ κυανέησιν ἐπ' ὄφρυσι νέεσσι Κρονίων,  
 Ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χῶϊλαι ἐπερὶ ῥώσαντο ἀνακλός,  
 Κρατὶ δὲ ἅπ' ἀθανάτοισι, μέγαν δ' ἐλελεξεν Ὀλύμπου.

— Statius also, in his note on this inspiring passage, informs us that not only Phidias formed his Jupiter upon this pattern, but that Euphranor also copied the same idea in his famous picture of Jove. In refutation of this sentiment of all antiquity the redoubted Scaliger, Virgil's obstinate champion, at once cuts short all authority by the following acute observation: "Aut ludunt Phidiam, aut nos ludit Phidias; etiam sine Homero puto illum scisse Jovem non carere superciliis et ~~o~~sfarie." Matchless assurance! A modern hypercritic, with his inconclusive, flat and vapid witticism against all antiquity! But such is the usual triumph of modern sagacity!

For an accurate description of this statue, which was counted among the wonders of the world, vide Pauf. Eliac. Prior. Cap. xi. page 400.

authority of Herodotus, but from other concurrent circumstances, that previous to his writing no such representations existed, the probable alternative will be that his poetical portraiture were in effect the archetypes from whence, either in his age or in that immediately succeeding, the images of the Gods were composed and formed. Indeed there is scarcely a divinity in all the host of the Grecian heavens whose symbolic form, such as it has been handed down to us by statues, we may not distinctly figure to ourselves by an attentive consideration of his expressive epithets and picturesque descriptions.

AND here I will, with the utmost diffidence, take the liberty of suggesting a circumstance which, if it were founded in fact, would strongly operate in favour of this last-mentioned opinion of Herodotus. My recollection does not enable me positively to assert, yet I do not believe that Homer in any part of his writings actually describes as an idol any statue of the Gods. The deities themselves he frequently paints to our imagination in the most lively colours, but no where, that I recollect, enters into any detailed description of their representations. If this be the fact, the presumption will undoubtedly be strong that no idol worthy of being described existed previous to his time, or at the least during the period of which he treats, since assuredly innumerable opportunities must have offered themselves in the course of his poems for diversifying and enriching them by such description. The only instance that I recollect either in the Iliad or Odyssæy where any mention is made of  
an

an idol is in the sixth book of the former, verse 237, &c. where the Trojans having been hard pressed by the valour of Diomed, Hector is enjoined by Helenus, as high priest, to repair to Troy, and there to direct the Queen that a solemn offering of gifts and vows be made to Minerva, in order to propitiate the angry goddess. Hector obeys, and Hecuba, as instructed by him, chuses from her wardrobe the richest and most beautiful veil, which she carries, with a splendid procession of matrons, to the fane of Minerva, and, through the means of the priestess Theano, lays it at the knees of the Goddess—

Ἦ δ' ἄρα πεπλον ἔλῃσα Θεανῶ καλλιπαρῆος  
Θηκεν Ἀθηναίης ἐπὶ γαστρίν ἡΰκομοιο.

Here we have an idol, which, however wholly undescribed either with regard to its form or material, we may suppose, from the mention of its knees, to have been a human figure; and this idol was probably no other than the fatal and celebrated palladium, as may be inferred as well from the part of the city in which its shrine was placed—ἐν πόλει ἄκρῃ—in the citadel, as from the epithet ἐρυσίπολις, guardian of the city.

Πόλιν Ἀθηναίη, ἐρυσίπολις, \* δῖα Θεάων.

“ O! guardian

\* The beauty of this expression, which, in my opinion, means *Goddess among Goddesses*, seems totally lost in the diffuse translation of Pope:

“ Oh awful Goddess, ever dreadful maid,

“ Troy’s strong defence, unconquer’d Pallas, aid!”

O ! guardian of these walls, Pallas revered,  
Divine of Goddesses !

Now the palladium, if we may credit the description of Apollodorus, Lib. iii. Cap. xi. was an idol little resembling those statues of Minerva, which may be supposed to have been afterwards formed on the plan given by Homer, being a figure apparently in the Egyptian style, with its feet joined, for so the words τοῖς δὲ ποσσὶ συμβεβηκὸς are understood by the best commentators, and indeed little more than a block of stone, or rather wood, cut out into something like the human form ; a species of sculpture, which, considering the age, when there was probably no other taste to be imitated but that of Egypt, was very likely to have prevailed. That it was a fitting figure seems to be marked by the veil having been laid either at or upon its knees, for *ἐπὶ* is capable of both significations ; and it must have been made of some light material, since Diomed could steal and carry it away, which circumstance induces me to suppose that it was of wood, as Apollodorus gives it the height of three cubits, a proportion which in stone would render such carriage impossible. This miraculous image is said to have come down from Heaven, a fable which would seem to indicate that it was not the manufacture of Troy ; and perhaps the idea of its heavenly origin may have been derived from its having been brought from Egypt, the great source of religion in remote ages, by some one of the early colonists\* who settled

\* I would here wish to be understood as alluding to the second colonization from the East, which took place soon after the extinction of the family and empire of the Titans, when  
Cecrops

settled in Greece and the neighbouring countries of Asia Minor, and began to introduce into those savage regions something like religion and manners.

IN the description of the shield of Achilles there is also an instance where figures of the Gods are mentioned, and that in a manner somewhat nearer approaching to our idea of divine representations. In the compartment relating to a besieged city a rally is made headed by Mars and Pallas, which deities are personified and described in the following beautiful lines :

. . . . ἦρχε δ' ἄρα σφιν Ἀρης καὶ Παλλας Ἀθηνῃ,  
 Ἄμφω χρυσεῖω, χρυσεῖα δὲ εἵματα ἔσθην,  
 Καλὴ καὶ μεγαλὴ συν τευχέσιν, ὥς τε θεῶ περ,  
 Ἄμφις ἀριζηλώ. Λαοὶ δ' ὑπολιζόμενοι ἦσαν.

Here however we are to observe that, as the poet speaks of a work of divine fabrication, and consequently ideal, he may be allowed to give free scope to his fancy, and, without incurring the censure of anachronism, to paint his Gods in a style which did not exist in the age of his hero ; neither does he mention these two magnificent figures as idols, but complying with the received opinion that the martial deities frequently assisted  
 their

Cecrops and Danaus from Egypt, and Cadmus from Phœnicia, settled in Greece, and introduced the useful arts, together with the worship of those deities who in their respective countries presided over them. Thus Cecrops introduced into Attica the cultivation of the olive and the worship of Minerva, who was adored in his native city, Sais, as the donor and patroness of that useful tree.

their friends in combat, and perhaps allegorically intimating that the party was conducted by Strength and by Prudence, he boldly personifies the patron and patroness of war according to his own sublime conception of the superior beauty and stature of Gods; an idea which, among many others, may be supposed to have given rise to those divine representations which were afterward framed.

AN instance also, where mention is made by Homer \* of statues, though not of Gods, occurs in the *Odyssæy*, Lib. vii. verse 90, &c. where in the description of the palace of Alcinous we find not only dogs of gold and silver, but golden boys holding torches. The dogs, however, which were endowed not only with life, but with immortality and perpetual youth, were the workmanship of Vulcan, and consequently may be described as approaching nearer to the life, for that is the meaning of the miraculous endowment above-mentioned, than could have been expected from any mortal sculptor of the age. The boys also, though nothing is said of their origin, may possibly be supposed to have come from the same shop; and, if they were equal in elegance to the torches they bore, which at that time were  
probably

\* It is somewhat singular that in all the writings of Homer there should not be, that I can recollect, any word expressive of *statue*. *Αγαλμα* indeed frequently occurs, but this word had not as yet obtained that signification, being only used to mean *ornamentum*, *oblectamentum*, vide Steph. Thes. And that even in ages very far posterior it did not necessarily convey the idea of a statue, but, like our word *idol*, might mean any representation of a God, however distant from the human form, is evident from the passage of Pausanias already quoted, where, speaking of the Thespian Cupid, he says, *και σφισιν αγαλμα παλαιστατον αργος λιθος*.

probably branches of pine, or some other resinous tree, I do not conceive that the divine workman had much reason to be proud of his work. But be that as it may, we are here to take notice that Phœacia, the seat of these miracles of art, was, as the learned and ingenious Mr. De Goguet\* has well proved, an island of Asia, where undoubtedly the arts were arrived at a greater degree of perfection than was known in European Greece.

THESE are the very few instances where, as far as I can recollect, Homer speaks of statues, which I should therefore suppose were, at the time of the Trojan war †, extremely rare

VOL. V. ( D ) in

\* Liv. ii. cap. i. page 84, in the note. Phœacia is usually supposed to be the island of Corfu, where certainly all this magnificence could scarcely have been expected. And yet, even though we were to adhere to the common opinion, it may be said that Homer in this instance seems to have indulged his imagination more perhaps than in any other part of his writings, and to have accumulated on this favourite spot every idea of splendour which his extensive travels had enabled him to collect throughout the more refined and sumptuous regions of Asia.

† There is yet another reason which would induce me to suppose that, in the times of which we treat, statues were in effect extremely rare in Greece, and that, if any were really wrought there, they must have been of the rudest form and workmanship, namely, the want of proper tools. We are told, it is true, that Dædalus and his nephew Talus, names which however appear apocryphal, invented the plane, the saw, the gimlet, the square, the levelling plummet and the compass, yet from the silence of Homer, who is apt to tell all he knows respecting many of these instruments, there is some reason to suspect that they did not all of them exist even in his time. When Calypso, whose divine power might certainly have furnished her lover with the best implements then in use, provides tools for Ulysses, to enable him to build his ship, she gives him nothing but a two-edged hatchet, a plane, a gimlet and a rule or straight edge; and if the joiner or shipwright was so ill provided, in how much worse a situation must the sculptor have been, whose work is so much more delicate and difficult of execution? Such tools as these are indeed so inadequate to the forming a human figure out of any material, that

I should



in Greece ; and, as one of these only is mentioned as an idol, I should, if I may be allowed to hazard a conjecture, which I desire may be received merely as such, be inclined to think that the worship of any thing in the human form was yet novel\* and unusual in that half-civilized region. It may indeed

I should be tempted to suppose that whatever idols of this kind existed in Greece were of foreign workmanship, and had been brought thither from Asia, and particularly from Egypt. That in the earlier ages, long antecedent to the Trojan war, sculpture was unknown in Greece, has already been made probable, from the sort of idols then in use, and we shall find in the next note the Egyptian Danaus, who probably had neglected to bring with him any idol from his native country, compelled to content himself with consecrating, as a symbol of Minerva, in her temple at Mindus, a rough block of wood.

\* I must not however conceal that there are ancient authorities, not only for the existence of statues during the age of the Trojan war and even previous to it, but for such statues having been used as idols. Pausanias, *Achaica*, p. 531. cites a tradition, which however he only mentions as such, that the temple of Juno at Samos was built by the Argonauts, and that the statue, τὸ ἀγάλμα, of that goddess was by them transported thither from Argos. His own opinion however is, that this temple must have been extremely ancient, as the image therein contained is the work of Smilis of Egina, who was contemporary with Dædalus, though less illustrious—He then proceeds to speak of Dædalus the Athenian, generally accounted the most ancient of statuaries, who executed, says he, Ἀγάλματα, which here must mean *carved works*, for Minos and for his daughters, as *Homer informs us in the Iliad*. The passage of Homer here alluded to is in the description of the last compartment of the shield of Achilles, where the dance is represented, Lib. xviii. V. 590. The lines are as follow :

Ἐν δὲ χορὸν ποικίλλε περικλυτός Ἀμφιγυήεις  
 Τῷ ἱκέλον, δῖον ποτ' ἐνὶ Κνωσσῷ εὐρείῃ  
 Δαίδαλος ἥσκησεν καλλιπλοκαμῷ Ἀριάδῃ.

This Dædalus is supposed to have flourished in the time of Hercules and Theseus, forty years before the Trojan war ; but modern sagacity has discovered that the ancients were erroneous in ascribing statues to him, an error into which they have been led by confounding this very ancient personage with Dædalus of Sicyon, who was indeed a statuary, but who lived many ages after his namesake of Athens. This assertion of the moderns against the ancients, and particularly against Pausanias backed by Homer, whose meaning he *probably* understood, may possibly be true,

indeed perhaps be matter of doubt whether, in the earlier stages of society, the human form would not be the last of all others to be worshipped. Independency of man on man is the constant and peculiar attribute of the savage state, and men would not be apt to love, still less to venerate and worship, those fellow-creatures with whom they deemed themselves on a perfect equality, and from whom they were in continual dread of hostility. Nor, on the other hand, would they chuse to confess that they feared them; and, upon these principles, they would no doubt wish to annex the ideas of superiority, love, awe and worship, to any thing rather than to one of their own species. Neither even in the second stage of society, when the hordes of savages had deemed it necessary in some degree to depart from their native rights by chusing from among themselves a commander, would such precarious

( D 2 )

and

true, but is much too bold for me to rely on in corroboration of my idea. It may also possibly be said that the word ἡσυχάζειν may signify that Dædalus had *composed* the dance for Ariadne, rather than that he had executed a representation of it in carving, and consequently that he was rather a maitre de ballet than a carver; but as Pausanias, a tolerable judge, has evidently taken the word in the latter sense, I must confess myself decided by his opinion, and admit that Dædalus the Athenian made carved works.

With regard, however, to the Juno of Samos, the poet Callimachus, as quoted by Eusebius in his Evangelical Preparation, says that it was the work of 'Celmis,' one of the Idæi Dactyli, who first taught the use of iron, and adds, that before his time the art of statuary was unknown, and that Juno had been previously represented by a rough plank or piece of wood, *Σανς*, as also was the Minerva consecrated by Danaus, in the city of Mindus.—This last circumstance I mention as it serves to corroborate what I have said in the text concerning the very ancient manner of representing the Gods. I have there endeavoured to shew, that the earlier idols were no other than stones roughly hewn, and here we find the divinities still farther debased when represented by planks or blocks of wood.

and limited chiefs\* as yet obtain any considerable share of respect or reverence; until, at length,—the power of these chieftains gradually increasing by the natural effects of continued command, by successful wars, and a consequent accession of such subjects as, from having been conquered by them, would be more immediately their vassals, prompt to obey every arbitrary order, especially against those new fellow-subjects who had helped to vanquish them,—they would become real, independent and absolute monarchs; and then, but not until then, would begin to be considered by those over whom they ruled as something more than human, and of a species far superior to themselves; from which state of society would naturally arise the worship of man, and consequently of the human figure.

THERE is yet another consideration which might perhaps co-operate to incline men, in their early state, to prefer even the worship of animals to that of each other. However superior the faculties of man, though uncultivated and wholly neglected, may be to those of the brute creation, such endowments, being rendered habitual to us by possession and use, would be in a far less degree objects of our admiration than those inferior powers, which nature, through the means of instinct, has allotted to brutes. It is only by reflection and philosophic enquiry that we come to appreciate our own superiority, and,  
to

\* That at the time of the siege of Troy the regal power, both among the Greeks and Trojans, was extremely limited, has been fully proved by the ingenious Monsieur de Goguet, *Origine des Loix*, Seconde Partie, Article vii.—and in many other parts of his excellent work.

to a race of men incapable of either, the sagacity of a dog would appear more surprizing than the effects and efforts of their own untutored reason. Neither can this preference, however whimsical, be deemed unnaturally absurd by us, who, even at this day, in the pride of our wisdom, are more apt to admire the tricks of a monkey than what we are in the hourly use of seeing performed by our own species. The usefulness also of animals would be contrasted with the mischievous and inimical qualities of man to man. The cow would be worshipped for her milk ; and, in a nation addicted to hunting, the primitive occupation of mankind, the dog would be adored as the instrument of their favourite sport, and the sure means of providing food. That sagacity of smell, by which he is enabled to pursue his unseen game, would be deemed more useful, and far more admirable, than the faculty of reasoning to which men were habituated, and which, for want of improvement and exertion, would be, in effect, little superior to instinct, and far less certain in its operations,

ANOTHER cause may yet be added which might not have been wholly inoperative :—Even in an age of the grossest ignorance some men must have existed superior in intellect to their fellows. These comparative philosophers, on whom the regulation of national religion would naturally devolve, either from some remaining trace of tradition, or from the superior strength of their own understanding, would have been apt to frame idols to be adored rather as typical representations of those divine qualities, which even savages could not fail to attribute to the supreme being, than as real Gods to be personally worshipped ;  
and

and for this purpose they would probably have preferred animals to men, not only as less adverse to the prejudices of their countrymen, but as better adapted to express those attributes of which they were meant to be emblems. Such beasts as were peculiarly possessed of certain qualities to the exclusion of others would naturally be chosen in preference to man, in whom, though in a less striking degree, all those qualities were united. Thus the wisdom of the deity would be figured by the fox or the serpent, his omnipotent might by the lion or tiger, and his beneficence by the cow or the sheep. And indeed we may perceive how inadequate the human figure was ultimately found to represent the attributes of the divine nature by the necessity under which the barbarous nations laboured, and still labour, of making monsters of their human idols; nay, even in the most enlightened times of idolatry, and among the most ingenious and polished people, it was found necessary to associate and connect animals with the figures of their Gods in order to make out their symbolical meaning\*: And thus we have the eagle of Jupiter, the peacock of Juno, the owl of Minerva, and the wolf of Mars.

SUCH are the causes which may be supposed to have been favourable to the precedence of animal worship; while, on the other hand, those slavish ideas, on which the adoration of our fellow

\* Since in matters so profoundly obscure as those of which we now treat every possible guess is allowable, perhaps I may be permitted to hazard a conjecture that these associated animals might have been the original forms under which the powers of the respective Gods, with whom they are invariably connected, had been worshipped previously to their having been endued with the human figure.

fellow creatures was originally founded, and which would render the transition easy of worshipping that being when dead, to whom, while alive, men had been accustomed to prostrate themselves, could not, as we have already mentioned, exist in the earlier stage even of monarchy; neither would gratitude, the second probable inducement, as yet operate, since the principal objects of that gratitude, the invention of useful arts, and even the institution of beneficial laws, must necessarily have been the result of time and experience, and cannot be supposed to have taken place until some considerable time after communities had been formed. The scale then of idolatry would probably be thus graduated:—When the traces of original revelation had been confused and well nigh obliterated, nothing remaining but the universal traditional belief in something supreme to which homage was due, and mankind, ceasing to adore one invisible God, had begun to seek for deities among his creatures, the first objects of adoration would undoubtedly be the great and glorious phenomena of nature, and first of all the Sun,

—— that with surpassing glory crown'd  
Looks from his sole dominion, like the God  
Of this new world.

His dazzling light, beyond the capacity of the human organ, would be admired with astonishment, his genial heat would be felt with grateful acknowledgment, and his benign influence on the vegetable world would speedily be understood and acknowledged even by savages. The awful majesty of  
the

the Moon, by whose mild splendour nature is relieved from the comfortless and unserviceable gloom of night, would next attract the admiration of man, which would be gradually extended through the rest of the heavenly orbs; neither can we be surpris'd that these high placed objects, seated, as it would seem, to be adored, within our ken indeed, but far beyond the reach of our inspection, should first attract the admiration and consequent worship of the infant world, when we reflect how short a time has elapsed since mankind have ceased universally to concur in allowing them a superior and controlling influence over human affairs. \* Animal worship, for the reasons already assigned, and because the inconstancy of our nature, *unsteadied* by revelation, would prompt us to wish for change even in our Gods, would probably be the next in succession, and last of all man would bow down to man.

THAT such has been the actual progress of idolatry we have reason to believe from the lights, faint and uncertain as they are, which history throws upon this obscure subject. That the sun and moon and stars were the original objects of adoration in the most

\* Sanconiatho seems to suppose that plants, for the deification of which the Egyptians long afterwards became infamous, were objects of worship in the earliest age. " But these first men, " (says he) consecrated the plants shooting out of the earth, and judged them Gods, and " worshipped them, upon whom they themselves lived, and all their posterity, and all before " them; to these they made meat and drink offerings." *Translation by Cumberland*, page 7.

By *these first men* he means men in the earliest times, probably during his ten first generations. If there ever was a time when men lived entirely upon vegetables, these, as their only aliment, might, on account of their utility, have been deified; and, if such custom ever existed, it must probably have been in the world's infancy.

most remote ages among the very ancient Chaldeans and Egyptians appears to be a fact well supported by historical proof; and how very early this primitive superstition gave place to the worship of animals among the last mentioned people, we know from the most uncontrovertible evidence, being informed, by sacred authority, that the Israelites, in imitation undoubtedly of those masters from whom they had been lately emancipated, erected in the wilderness, not a representation of the sun, nor yet a human idol, but a golden calf.

EGYPT indeed, where, as Cicero tells us, “ \* Omne ferè genus “ bestiarum consecraverunt,” seems to have been the original and copious source of this species of idolatry, which strange propensity, in a people exclusively celebrated for their wisdom, has been, both by ancient and modern writers, generally, though perhaps unjustly, ascribed to the pre-eminent and boundless superstition of the Egyptians. I say, *perhaps unjustly*, since the supposition appears to me by no means improbable that it may have taken its rise rather in the peculiar genius

[ E ] of

\* De Natura Deorum, lib. iii. cap. xv. tom. 2. Edit. Oliv.

VIRG. ÆN. viii. Omnigenumque Deum monstra, et latrator Anubis.

JUVENAL, SAT. xv. Quis nescit, Volusi Bithynice, qualia demens  
Ægyptus portenta colat? Crocodilon adorat  
Pars hæc, illa pavet faturam serpentibus Ibin.

Ib. O Sanctas Gentes! quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis  
Numina——



of that people, extremely addicted, as we well know, to emblem and symbolical representation, than, as is commonly thought, in the preposterous and unaccountable desire of multiplying their gods under the most humiliating and degrading forms; which conjecture, if it should be allowed any weight, will, in some measure, free us from the difficulty under which we labour of being compelled to suppose that the most enlightened nation of all antiquity was also the most absurdly superstitious. The concealment of truth under apposite emblems was a favourite and fashionable wisdom of the remote ages, and from a marked superiority in this science Egypt had perhaps principally obtained the universal character of wise, so that possibly the very practice, which appears to us the result of folly, may in effect have been derived from what, in those times, was denominated superior wisdom.

At what precise period the human form began to be worshipped is no where, that I know of, ascertained; but I cannot avoid thinking that this species of idol, though of high antiquity, is of later date than animal representations\*. Many Egyptian deities, it is true, have come down to us in the  
human

\* Idolatry appears indeed to have adopted the human figure by degrees, since in very early times, and among some of the earliest nations, we find idols compounded of man and animal. Thus Dagon, a supreme goddess among the Philistines, is supposed to have been formed like our idea of mermaids, half woman, half fish. The Egyptian Sphinx is also of this kind, woman and lion. But the most whimsical composition is that of the Canopus, woman and jug.

human shape; but, as the same deities have also been represented under the figure of animals, I should be apt to give these the priority, as well for the reasons already mentioned, as because, in effect, the idols of this kind usually bear evident marks of superior antiquity. Thus Osiris and Isis are sometimes represented as a man and woman, but they are also represented as two snakes intertwined \*, which latter I should

[ E 2 ]

be

\* Such at least is the interpretation I give to a very ancient and curious basso relievo in my possession. It is of green porphyry, and was brought by me from Egypt. There are on the heads of the snakes, ornaments which differ from each other, and are proper to the divinities they represent. That in times early indeed the supreme God among the Egyptians was represented by a serpent we learn from Sanchoniatho, who tells us, page 14 of Cumberland's translation, " that the God called by the Phœnicians the good Dæmon, Ἀγαθαΐμων, is named by " the Egyptians Kneph, and they draw him as a dragon or serpent, but put on him a hawk's " head." Osiris is also often found in a human figure with the head of a hawk, whose sharp-sightedness and rapid flight were meant to indicate the sun, which was undoubtedly represented by this god, as the moon was by his wife and sister Isis. Probably also the hawk's head might have been given to him as supreme among the Gods, in imitation of the Kneph above mentioned, and for the same reason he might have been figured by the serpent. These two principal deities among the Egyptians may possibly serve in some degree to illustrate that gradation of idolatry which I have supposed. Osiris and Isis, though in process of time they came to be taken for almost all the divinities, were originally no other than the sun and the moon, which luminaries were probably first worshipped in their real substances, until by degrees they began to be represented by animals significant of their qualities. Half-human monsters next took place; and last of all human figures, decorated, or rather explained, by various emblems.

Apis, which was probably meant for the symbol of cultivation, still retained his animal shape, though he also was, in more modern times, modelled according to the novel fashion, being in some instances figured with a human head.

Anubis also, who was probably at first represented by a dog, in allusion to the dog-star, the propitious precursor of the Nile's increase, gradually grew into the form of a man, with the head of that animal.

The basso relievo, mentioned in the beginning of this note, will, I think, serve to explain a  
very

be tempted to suppose the original idols, while the former were probably the fruit of Grecian conquest, and consequently not more ancient than the time of the Ptolemies, under whose empire Egypt is known to have received a tincture of Grecian manners and taste, which however she mixed with her own; and indeed I have never yet seen any image of this sort in which, through the Egyptian style, the Grecian sculpture was not easy to be distinguished.

BUT I ought to ask pardon of my reader for this long digression of conjectural argument, which I have been induced to hazard from the hope of rendering more probable the assertion of Herodotus, that the figures of the Gods, as worshipped in his time, were first invented by Hesiod and Homer.

IF my interpretation be allowed any weight, this most ancient and venerable of prophane historians may be rescued from the imputation of false opinion and absurdity, his sense being no more than that Hesiod and Homer were the first among the Grecians who reduced the genealogy of the Gods to a complete and regular system, who gave to them certain surnames which they did not possess before the time of these poets, who distinguished their tutelary functions,

very obscure, and very doubtfully explained marble, given us by Montfaucon, tom. ii. part. ii. page 70.

tions, and appropriated to each of them a peculiar mode of worship and of sacrifice, and who invented or gave rise to the particular forms under which they have ever since been represented. And indeed Herodotus appears to have purposely explained himself, respecting those opinions which he wishes to be considered as his own, at the conclusion of the passage now under consideration, where, without controverting the relations of the priests, (whose sacred authority in matters of remote antiquity where religion is concerned, he seems by his silence implicitly to admit,) he separates and distinguishes his own sentiments from their traditions:—"The first things (says he) "the priests of Dodona told me, but the latter, respecting "Hesiod and Homer, I myself assert." That is, the priests of Dodona are they who gave me the account of this very early state of religion, and informed me that the names first given to the Gods were received by the Pelasgi from Egypt, and by the Greeks from them; but respecting what I have said of the very imperfect and scanty knowledge of the ancients in theology, and with regard to my assertion that Hesiod and Homer gave surnames to the Gods, and were the authors and founders of our present improved system, that I declare, as my own opinion, which I think myself capable of forming, and authorized to give, as the time of those bards, in comparison with the remote ages, is not very far distant from my own.

It would seem also, from the words of Herodotus, that the historian ascribed somewhat more, and of much greater importance, to Hesiod and Homer than the inventions expressly detailed

tailed in the passage relating to them. “ But from whence  
 “ (says he) each of the Gods had his existence, or whether  
 “ they have all been from eternity, or under what forms,  
 “ are matters unknown until yesterday, as I may say; for  
 “ Hesiod and Homer, who lived four hundred years before me,  
 “ and no more, &c.” From this we may not unreasonably  
 infer that Herodotus attributes to the bards in question, not  
 only the mere theogony, ceremonial worship, surnames, functions  
 and figures of the Gods, but the investigation and elucidation  
 of that great and essential point in divinity, whether their  
 existence had been from all eternity; a question indeed of the  
 highest importance, especially in a religion where the received  
 opinion limited the existence of the Gods, by assigning to each  
 of them fathers and mothers, but which I do not recollect to  
 have been discussed or elucidated in any writings of these  
 bards that have come down to us, though I doubt not that  
 such elucidation may by inference be drawn from sundry  
 passages in these poems. May we however allow ourselves to  
 suppose that our historian had seen some philosophical poems  
 of Hesiod or Homer wherein this great subject was treated,  
 but which are now buried in oblivion? The fact, though  
 unlikely, is by no means impossible, as many of their works  
 are known to have been lost, and the bare possibility that  
 such treatises may have existed is a matter of much curio-  
 sity.

THESE imperfect and loose hints I have thrown out merely  
 to shew that the opinion of Herodotus may be reconciled to  
 the

the truth ; and surely, if that should be possible, it is far better to endeavour such reconciliation, than boldly to controvert, or peremptorily to contradict, the assertions of this most respectable and most ancient historian, or to pretend more knowledge of Grecian antiquity in the present age than was possessed by a learned Greek, who wrote four hundred years only after Homer, and whose antiquity is so remote that he ventures to account the æra of this bard but of yesterday—*μέχρι οὗ πρῶτην τὴ καὶ χθες.*

AND now having drawn to a conclusion the more immediate subject of this essay, I shall take leave to advert to a relative point, from the discussion of which I have hitherto abstained, lest the thread of my discourse should have been thereby interrupted and confused. The opinion of Herodotus, that all those poets who were said to have existed before Hesiod and Homer, were in effect posterior to their time, has brought down upon him a torrent of abusive contradiction. Certain it is that there are great authorities against him ; but then it is as certain that, since in a question of this sort superior antiquity may be supposed to include superior knowledge, none of those authors, upon whose authority he is contradicted, can in this respect be put in competition with him. Pausanias, in many parts of his work, mentions the names of several poets who lived before Hesiod and Homer, one of whom he supposes to have been prior even to Orpheus—Cap. xvii. page 762, *Λυκίος δὲ Οἰήν, &c.*—“ The Lycian Olen, “ who composed among the Greeks the most ancient hymns.—

“ But

“ But after Olen, Pamphus and Orpheus made verses.” This last famous poet, Orpheus \*, is said to have written in the time of Hercules, and consequently forty years, at least, before the Trojan war. Diogenes Laertius, in his Proœmium, page 3, has these words—*ἰδοὺ γοῦν παρὰ μὲν Ἀθηναίοις γεγόνε Μουσαῖος, παρὰ δὲ Θεβαίοις Λίνος, &c.* “ Musæus was conspicuous among the Athenians, Linus among the Thebans, and the former, son of Eumolpus, is said to have first treated in poetry the genealogy of the Gods, and of the sphere. He is reported also to have said that all things sprang from one, and into that one would be resolved. He is thought to have died in the time of Phalaris.”

INNUMERABLE other such authorities might be produced, which are certainly of considerable weight, though not absolutely conclusive against the opinion of Herodotus, who, from  
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\* Some moderns, relying on the authority of Aristotle as quoted by Cicero, have gone far beyond Herodotus respecting Orpheus, positively denying, not, like our historian, that he was prior to Homer, but that any such man ever existed. The words of Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, Lib. i. Cap. 38, page 429, are “ *Orpheum poetam docet Aristoteles nunquam fuisse, et hoc Orphicum carmen Pythagorei ferunt cujusdam fuisse Cercopis.*” The treatise of Aristotle here alluded to is lost, but that philosopher probably meant no more than that the Orphic verses attributed to this ancient sage were not written by him, or, perhaps, that Orpheus never was a poet, in either of which senses Aristotle seems to coincide with the opinion of Herodotus. The collection which has come down to our times is certainly of very high antiquity, and, excepting some interpolations inserted by the pious zeal of the early Christians, probably existed in the time of Herodotus, whose judgment, respecting the priority of Homer, may be supposed to have been founded on a critical examination of these very poems. Indeed it seems to be the generally received opinion that, however ancient the Orphic collection may be, it is, in effect, a very ancient forgery. — For a full and learned account of Orpheus, vide Cudworth’s *Intellectual System*, page 294, &c.

the very early age in which he lived, may be supposed to have been better able to detect the forgery of the works attributed to these supposed ancient poets, or, allowing the compositions to be genuine, more accurately to ascertain their precise degree of antiquity, than those writers who lived long after his time.

BUT, however it may operate against me and my favourite writer, I must not conceal a proof, seemingly of a much more decisive nature, which is produced by the ingenious author of the Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer, page 100, where Herodotus is brought forward to disprove his own assertion, and flatly to contradict himself. The historian, in that very book, Euterpe, page 113, where he gives his opinion concerning the priority of Hesiod and Homer to all such bards as were said to have lived before them, speaking of the word *Ocean*, thus expresses himself, Ὅμηρον δὲ, ἢ τινὰ τῶν προτέρων γενομένων Ποιῶν, δοκεῖν τοῦ ὀνόματος εὐροῖαν εἰς τὴν Ποιήσιν ἐσεναικάσθαι; which words Blackwall thus translates:—"Homer, I believe, *or some* of the poets who lived before him, having invented the word, inserted it into their poetry." The passage however may be otherwise translated, as it indeed is in most of the versions I have seen; and the words, ἢ τινὰ τῶν προτέρων γενομένων Ποιῶν, may mean no more than, *or some one of the ancient poets*; or, as we commonly express ourselves, *some one of the more ancient poets*. And surely, where a passage is capable of two meanings, that which may tend to involve the author in a seeming contradiction ought sedulously to be avoided. But, not to insist



upon this, and supposing the interpretation of Blackwall to be the true one, may it not be said that Herodotus here gives no opinion of his own, but merely speaks according to that which was generally received, and which, even where he afterward contradicts it, he allows to have been the generally adopted idea. An author may, without inconsistency, mention a popular story or belief, which may possibly be true, but to which he gives no great credit, without combating it at the time; and yet, when the course of his argument leads him to a serious investigation of the fact, he may give his opinion in contradiction to such popular belief, the subsequent passage thus standing in some sort as an illustration of the former. Homer, says he, or some prior poet, invented the word *ocean*—but, in my opinion, there were no poets prior to Homer, therefore Homer must have invented it. Besides we may observe that Herodotus never positively asserts that there were no anterior poets, but only tells us that *such is his opinion*—ὅσ' ἔρεον, μοι γὰρ δοκεῖν, ἐγένοντο τοῦτων; and therefore may, without incurring the censure of inconsistency, previously to his declaring his sentiment on the point, mention an idea, which may *possibly* be well founded, though, according to his judgment, it be erroneous.

THERE is yet another authority produced, which, if it were clear of objection, would indeed put the matter out of all dispute—no less than that of Homer himself, who, as interpreted by some, in his description of the shield of Achilles, *seems* to make his young musician sing of Linus. Doctor Gillies,

who,

who, in his History of Greece, has warmly adopted the fashionable opinion concerning Herodotus, and whose learned work will serve throughout to exemplify what I have taken the liberty to suggest, respecting the superiority of modern adepts in the knowledge of antiquity over the ancients themselves, seems however rather too peremptory in his assertion, page 184, note 4, “ that the *ignorance* of Herodotus, and of “ his contemporaries, concerning the history of their ancient “ bards, is clearly proved from the passage of Homer above “ mentioned, and from another passage, which he quotes from “ the *Odyssey*, respecting Melampus.” The lines, which are supposed to allude to *Linus*, are as follow :

Τοῖσιν δ' ἐν μέσσοισι Παιῖς φόρμιγγι λιγυῖη  
 Ἰμέιρον κιθάριζε· λίνον δ' ὑπο καλὸν ᾄειδε  
 Λεπταλὴν φωνῇ.

Lib. xviii. page 193, verse 570.

But in the meaning of this passage commentators essentially differ, some translating that the boy sung the song of Linus, while others, no less names than Didymus, Eustathius, Madame Dacier, Boivin and Clarke, take *λίνον* to signify the strings of the instrument, which, say the old commentators, were at that time made of flax, those of gut having been displeasing to the Gods. So that, according to this interpretation, which seems by far the more natural, the lines will mean no more than that, *in the midst of these a boy played sweetly on a brill harp, and sung TO THE FAIR STRING with a tender voice.*

It must not however be concealed that Pausanias, a great authority, favours the former interpretation, vide *Bœotica*, page 766. But the authority of Herodotus, who, as he *probably* had read Homer, would surely never have hazarded his assertion had he supposed that the bard himself had mentioned a poet previous to his time, is, in a disputed passage, still greater than that of Pausanias. I wonder the Doctor did not chuse to quote Herodotus against himself, who, in his second book, page 140, mentions a song sung by the Egyptians, which, though they term it *Maneros*, is in effect the same with that which the Greeks call *Linus*. But the song of Linus,\* which was *probably* no other than a lamentation for the death of that personage, may have existed and been sung in the days of Herodotus both in Egypt and in Greece, and yet Linus, the subject of that song, may not have lived before the time of Homer.

BUT even though we should follow Pausanias in his interpretation, still I must assert that the *ignorance of Herodotus* would not be thereby proved, since that elegant traveller most certainly mentions Linus as a musician, and by no means as a poet; an evident proof, by the way, that, though the two vocations

\* The *λινος* among the Greeks was a dirge or song of lamentation, but I do not think it at all clear that the death of Linus was therein commemorated and lamented. Perhaps this species of music was supposed to have been invented by Linus, and may have taken its name from him. This earliest of musicians is said by some to have been slain by his father Apollo for teaching the use of gut instead of flaxen strings, while others report that his brains were knocked out with his own lyre by Hercules, the rusticity of whose musical performance he had derided.

vocations were usually united, they were notwithstanding sometimes separated even in the earliest times, and long before their formal separation at the re-establishment of the Pythian games in the year before Christ 590. Pausanias, in the passage alluded to, has these words—Ἐπη δὲ οὗτε ὁ Ἀμφιμάρου Λίνος, οὗτε δὲ τοῦτου γενομένος ὕστερον, ἐποίησαν ἢ καὶ ποιήθεντα εἰς τοὺς ἔπειτα οὐκ ἦλθε—*But neither Linus, the son of Amphimarus, nor the latter, who lived afterwards, made verses; or, if they made any, none of them have come down to after ages.* And this is the conclusion of the same paragraph, where the interpretation of Homer's verses supposed to respect Linus is given. Indeed in this very chapter, not many lines before, the vocation of Linus as a musician, who had acquired his fame by his skill in that science, is expressly pointed out—μεγίστην δὲ τῶν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ ὅσοι προήερον ἐγενόνηο, λάβοι δοξάν ἐπὶ Μουσικῇ—*Bœotica*, Cap. xix. page 766.

HENCE it appears that Herodotus, where he mentions the lamentation for Linus as sung by the Egyptians, and Pausanias also, speak of him as a musician, and not as a poet; and consequently that neither Herodotus contradicts himself, nor does the testimony of Homer, supposing the interpretation of Pausanias to be the true one, in any degree combat the opinion of Herodotus that there were no *poets* among the Greeks more ancient than Homer. That Linus may in effect have possessed this disputed priority is a presumption supported by many strong circumstances; but neither Homer, nor Herodotus in contradiction to himself, nor Pausanias, can be brought to prove it.

WITH

WITH respect to Melampus, he is indeed mentioned in the 15th book of the *Odyſſey*, verſe 225; but I cannot ſee how it appears from that paſſage that he was a poet. The name of this very ancient perſonage is mentioned upon the following occaſion:—Theoclymenus, having killed one of his own tribe, and being purſued as a murderer, conjures Telemachus to ſave him from the impending danger by receiving him on board his ſhip. This Theoclymenus was a ſoothſayer, *Μανίς*, and was, as the poet informs us, by a long genealogy, lineally deſcended from Melampus; of whom, however, nothing is ſaid which can convey the ſlighteſt hint reſpecting his profeſſion. The hiſtory of this ancient ſage is well known—Bayle, article Melampus, gives a full account of every thing that has been ſaid of him by ancient writers. He, as well as his deſcendant, was a ſoothſayer or prophet, and a great phyſician, in which laſt character he is principally illuſtrious; but no writer of antiquity gives the moſt remote hint of his having been a poet. The phyſicians of the early ages were uſually ſoothſayers; their vocation was accounted holy; and religious ceremonies, or exorcifms, went hand in hand with the practice of medicine. Virgil, in his third *Georgic*, mentions this Melampus, but certainly not as a bard:

. . . . . ceſſere magiſtri

Phylirides Chiron, Amathæontuſque Melampus.

It ſeems indeed to be ſuppoſed by many that every profeſſional man of remote antiquity, who is recorded with diſtinction

inction by the ancient authors, must of course have been a bard, upon this plausible assumption, that, in the distant ages, whoever taught must necessarily have taught in verse. That this, however, was not the opinion of Pausanias is clearly evident from the passage already quoted relating to Linus, who, as he informs us, *wrote no verses*; and though he adds that, *if he did write any they are not come down to us*, his bare supposition, *that he had written none*, sufficiently proves that this ancient and judicious writer did not deem the characters even of musician and bard by any means inseparable; and, if any professions could have been deemed necessarily so, it must certainly have been those.

AND here I will conclude this long, and, I fear, tedious essay, with a repetition of my testimony in favour of Herodotus, namely, that through the whole course of my Eastern travels I have ever found him a faithful guide; a testimony which I am happy to find corroborated, and, in my opinion confirmed, by the much more extensive and certain experience of one, whom, in a point of this nature, I should almost deem an infallible judge—my ever lamented friend, Robert Wood, whose sagacity and erudition could only be equalled by his diligence and candour. In his Essay on the original Genius of Homer, page 184, he coincides with me in the following decisive words:—"Not that I would encourage that diffidence in Herodotus, which has been already carried too far. Were I to give my opinion of him in this respect, having followed him through most of the countries which he has visited, I  
" would

“ would say, that he is a writer of veracity in his descrip-  
 “ tions of what he saw, but of credulity in his relations of  
 “ what he heard.

SUCH is the judgment of the most competent of critics, whose comment upon his author was not the result of closet investigation, but of ocular examination into the facts reported—Such is the judgment of a learned and diligent enquirer, who followed the steps of Herodotus through almost all his travels, and had every possible opportunity of detecting his errors, and contradicting his falsifications. Yet even in this character of our author, which good sense, experience and candour have dictated, there is still something which may perhaps be allowed to bear rather too hard upon the venerable father of history. The credulity of Herodotus is a fault which his most sanguine favourers have generally imputed to him; and yet even this may perhaps be palliated, when we candidly consider the state of the times in which he lived. Egypt was in those days esteemed the seat of polish, and the fountain of science—Greece, not long since emerged from ignorance, had from thence received her philosophy, her religion, her Gods; and consequently the Egyptian priests, in whom exclusively resided all the knowledge of that scientific region, would by the Grecians be held in the highest veneration; in religious matters especially they would be thought to possess a patriarchal authority; their relations and opinions would obtain implicit credit, and almost be considered as articles of faith. Herodotus was a traveller for instruction, and had journeyed  
 into

into those parts from whence alone, according to the received opinion, it could be gathered, and from whence his predecessors had imported into their native land all the knowledge it then possessed. Can any thing then be more natural, or indeed more necessary, than that, in reciting his history to his countrymen assembled at the Olympic games, he should fully and even indiscriminately inform them of all he had heard in a country by them deemed the mother of science, and more especially from that class of men whom they esteemed as oracles?

YET even here he acted with caution. His own good sense got the better even of the credulity of his age, and we accordingly find in many parts of his work hints thrown out, which sufficiently evince that he himself did not thoroughly believe all those facts and opinions which he thought himself bound to relate. In his second book, page 161-2, after having related some wonderful stories concerning Rampfinitus, one of which he plainly tells us *he does not believe*—ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐ πίστις, he concludes his narration with the following words:—Τοισι μὲν νυν ὑπ' Αἰγυπτίων λεγομένοις, χρᾶσθω ὅτεω τὰ τοιαῦτα πιθανὰ ἐστὶ· ἐμοὶ δὲ πᾶρα πάντᾳ τὸν λόγον ὑποκείται, ὅτι τὰ λεγόμενα ὑπ' ἐκαστῶν ἀκοῇ γράφω—“ These things however which the Egyptians relate “ let every man think credible according as he likes; for my “ part through my whole discourse I have determined to “ write whatever has been told me.” Nay in his seventh book, page 574, he goes still farther, and makes the following pro-



testation—Ἐγὼ δὲ ὀφείλω λέγειν τὰ λεγόμενα, πειθεσθαι γὰρ μὴ οὐ  
 πανταπασι ὀφείλω. καὶ μοι τοῦτο τὸ ἔπος ἔχῃω ἐς πάντα τον λόγον—  
 “ But it is my duty to relate the things which are told me,  
 “ though I am not bound to believe them all ; and let what  
 “ I now say be established through the whole course of my  
 “ history.”

THUS far have I ventured to essay my weak endeavours towards the vindication of an author by whose guidance and instruction my travels have been rendered delightful and profitable, and by whom, I must again repeat it, I have never been deceived ; neither let me be accused of presumption or of arrogance in having thus attempted to controvert the opinions of those, who, from their acknowledged superiority both in erudition and capacity, are so much more competent judges than I can pretend to be, when I assure my brethren of the Academy, to whose partiality, rather than to their judgment, this slight essay is submitted, that my just and too well founded timidity would have yielded to no motive less powerful than the ardent, and, I trust, not unwarrantable desire, of contributing towards that important and universal benefit, historic certainty, by endeavouring to redeem from suspicion a writer upon whose credit our knowledge of antiquity, and of remote history, almost wholly depends, and without whose aid and information the darker ages would be plunged into tenfold obscurity. The certainty of historic relation is of the highest importance to mankind—history is the school of man-  
 ners.

ners. All bounteous Heaven, while it wisely denies us the knowledge of futurity, because such knowledge would but tend to increase and aggravate the miseries and dangers of our lives, has beneficently granted to us the recollection of things past, a faculty, which the habit of possession alone could prevent our acknowledging to be as wonderful as that of prescience, and which is essentially necessary to the regulation of all our actions, and consequently to our happiness both now and hereafter. But as the shortness of our abode in this brief and temporary mansion might render nugatory the benefits of this salutary gift, the same all-bountiful providence has sent history to our aid, by the intervention of which our experience is lengthened backwards into the most remote ages, and even to the beginning of time! Let us then respect as we ought this sacred source of all our wisdom, and, while we candidly examine into the probability of historic narration, be cautious of presuming too much upon our own sagacity; never, but with the utmost circumspection and humble diffidence, daring to contradict those ancient guides, by whom alone our steps can be conducted through the misty labyrinth of antiquity, and more especially the venerable parent of that science, which, by recording the observation of all ages, has put into our possession the whole series of progressive improvement, and the accumulated wisdom of the world, even from its infancy, and without which our boasted noon of knowledge must necessarily have been but a dawn.